United Nations E/C.19/2006/3/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Report of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. The present report stems from a decision made by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues at its annual meeting in September 2005 in Panama City to prepare an overview of indicators and systems of data collection and disaggregation currently in place in its member organizations to be presented to the Permanent Forum at its fifth session.

2. A joint paper on data collection and disaggregation by ethnicity presented to the Permanent Forum at its second session in 2003 by United Nations agencies identified significant gaps in information related to indigenous peoples. An experts' workshop on the same topic was subsequently organized by the Permanent Forum. Since then, great efforts have been undertaken by agencies to fill those gaps. In doing so, they have taken into consideration other principles promoted by the Permanent Forum and affirmed in the Support Group statement on the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples regarding the process and nature of data collection and disaggregation. The principles include the importance of the participation of indigenous peoples in data collection and the need to elaborate culturally appropriate indicators that reflect indigenous perspectives and therefore better assess their situation and experience. From an indigenous perspective, poverty can refer to a deprivation of not only income but of cultural rights as well.

3. Indicators and data collection are two different aspects of information-gathering. While indicators specify the type of information sought, such information can be obtained only if the data are available and will depend on how data are

* E/C.19/2006/1.

06-26265 (E) 220306

collected. Sampling is an important element, especially in countries where indigenous peoples are a minority of the population.

4. The present paper reviews data-collection systems and indicators related to indigenous peoples currently used in the United Nations system and presents projects under way to address existing shortfalls. Contributions were received from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Division for Public Administration Development Management and Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It appears that while data disaggregation by ethnic origin is still limited in the United Nations system, there are many concomitant efforts from different parts of the system to come up with indigenous-specific indicators that reflect indigenous visions. However, such efforts need to be coordinated to ensure that they do not overlap or lead to inconsistencies.

5. Given space limitations, the present report can mention only some of the initiatives undertaken by Support Group members. Should the Permanent Forum or other persons be interested in obtaining more details on a specific project, they are invited to contact directly the focal point of the lead agency.

II. Data sources

6. Although data sources vary from agency to agency, three main ones can be identified, based on the way data are collected.

A. Data collected by national institutions

7. Several agencies rely on data collected at the national level, usually by national offices of statistics. Demographic censuses provide useful information, although they are not usually disaggregated. Most agencies, including UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNIFEM, rely on official information. In Mexico, for example, UNIFEM is able to use disaggregated data because national censuses contain questions related to ethnic origin and language. However, one problem with national data is that each country has its own system; therefore data are not always comparable. In Bolivia, efforts are being made at the national level to disaggregate data collected in the census by asking questions relating to the language spoken and self-identification. Other studies are undertaken by the national bureau for statistics on sociodemographic characteristics of indigenous peoples. The data are then used by United Nations agencies in their work with indigenous peoples.

8. Some agencies extract data from various reports. For example, ILO extracts disaggregated data from reports submitted by the States parties to ILO conventions

107 and 169. OHCHR relies on quantitative and qualitative data mentioned in various reports to the treaty bodies, the reports of the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights (especially the Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people) and other reports of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

B. Data collected by international organizations or institutions

9. Agencies also use data collected by themselves or by other organizations. For its human development index, UNDP uses data collected by other agencies or international organizations, such as WHO for health data (although they are often not disaggregated). UNESCO uses data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union for countries belonging to those organizations. UNICEF has its own system of data collection, the multi-indicators cluster surveys, which are household-based surveys. In the latest round of data collection, questions were included on the mother tongue, religion and ethnic group of the head of the household. The World Health Survey conducted by WHO compiles comprehensive baseline information on the health of populations and on the outcomes associated with investment in health systems and their operation. However, no centralized collection of data on indigenous peoples is available.

10. One major source of data are the demographic and health surveys conducted by an international institute and used by many agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. Data are disaggregated by ethnic and indigenous origin for some countries, though not on a systematic basis.

11. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity uses the Ethnologue database to collect data on the status of linguistic diversity and the number of speakers of indigenous languages, and UNESCO published the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing* (2001).

C. Data collected through specific projects

12. Several agencies support specific projects related to indigenous peoples and in the process are able to collect disaggregated data. Though such data remain anecdotal and difficult to compare, they provide a basis for further reflection on processes of data collection related to indigenous peoples and possible indicators. ILO collects data through outputs from technical cooperation projects relating to indigenous issues undertaken with ILO technical support.

13. ECLAC, with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank, conducted a project on the theme "Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendents in Latin America in censuses", which led to the publication of three national studies in Bolivia, Ecuador and Panama, available on the ECLAC website. Data were also translated into maps for each country.

14. WHO collects data in its health-specific programmes, though they do not specifically involve the collection of indigenous health statistics.

15. In Bolivia, a joint United Nations project led to the elaboration of a document on the theme of size and repartition of the Bolivian population according to ethno-

linguistic criteria. Indigenous peoples were defined as those who identified themselves as indigenous in the 2001 census, and those who spoke an indigenous language. The study concluded that 65.9 per cent of the Bolivian population was indigenous.

D. Gaps

16. As noted above, although some improvements can be seen, in many instances data are still not disaggregated for indigenous peoples. One issue that has been raised many times is the lack of definition of indigenous peoples. Another is that many indicators do not reflect indigenous peoples' experience and perspectives, but are based on existing systems that may not be relevant for indigenous peoples. Moreover, indigenous peoples are often not consulted in decision-making related to the data-collection process and disaggregation.

E. Current efforts

17. Several agencies have undertaken projects that aim to develop indicators related to the situation of indigenous peoples.

18. With regard to qualitative indicators of poverty appropriate for indigenous peoples, ILO has conducted three case studies on indigenous participation in poverty-reduction strategy processes in Cambodia, Cameroon and Nepal, in consultation with indigenous peoples. Among other conclusions, the studies raised important concerns regarding indigenous and tribal peoples' perceptions of poverty, which are often quite different from those of the mainstream population.

19. The studies from Cambodia and Cameroon, for example, were based on in-depth consultations with a number of indigenous communities. The following list of shared characteristics of their indicators of poverty can be drawn from the studies:

- Indigenous peoples' perceptions of poverty are not static, but change according to their level of integration into mainstream society/the market economy and the specific problems of lack of access to land and resources that indigenous communities face.
- Lack of land and resource rights were cited as a major indicator of poverty.
- The lack of recognition of the collective rights of indigenous peoples was also felt by the peoples concerned to be a hindrance to the design of effective and more appropriate ways of addressing their poverty.
- Access to services (e.g. education and health) was an important indicator of poverty.
- Food security played a key role in indigenous peoples' own perceptions of poverty.
- Cultural poverty (with particular reference to the erosion of traditional decision-making) was highlighted as an important indicator of poverty.
- Lack of knowledge and information was also an important contributing factor to poverty.

20. ILO plans in the near future to review possible indicators of economic activities and work conditions of indigenous groups as part of other projects to be launched. The projects will not yet be generally applicable, but may provide a basis for further work.

21. In 2004, the Inter-American Development Bank prepared a study on well-being and poverty indicators for indigenous peoples to assess current indicators and develop new ones that better reflect indigenous perspectives.

22. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is hoping to undertake a project seeking to establish a set of statistical guidelines for indigenous, aboriginal or minority peoples, intended to support national statistics offices. A steering committee with representatives of key cultural groups will lead the project, with the Institute providing assistance as required. Decisions on implementation will be left to national agencies. The objective is to elaborate draft guidelines and compile existing data in time for inclusion in a world report on cultural diversity, due to be published in 2007.

23. The States parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested that the ad hoc open-ended intersessional Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions of the Convention explore the need and possible options for indicators for the protection of innovations, knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities and report the results to the Conference of the Parties to the convention in March 2006.

24. The UNDP regional programme in South-East Asia, with the collaboration of the indigenous peoples' organization "Tebtebba" and the national statistics office of the Philippines, is developing data-collection tools for Government use and inclusion in the next census. The tools will involve both disaggregation of indigenous populations and specific indicators to reflect the development circumstances of indigenous peoples compared to the rest of the population. The regional programme is also addressing the lack of disaggregated data by conducting independent surveys in the countries involved. Studies have been completed in Cambodia and Thailand, are ongoing in Nepal and planned for Indonesia. Results will be disseminated, and other countries will be encouraged to do the same. The work will be used towards the development of indicators for a regional human development index, proposed for 2007.

25. Work on indicators is under way in OHCHR too. In Guatemala and Mexico, OHCHR offices are in the process of developing a table of indicators to measure the effectiveness and achievement by the State of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Special Rapporteur from his visits to those countries. At the global level, OHCHR is also working on translating human rights standards into indicators to monitor their implementation. Such work is being conducted within the framework of the process of treaty body reform. Once adopted, the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples will constitute a standard for the assessment of the situation of indigenous peoples' rights.

26. WHO has planned to undertake an analysis from the perspective of ethnicity for a study on the cultural sensitivity of health systems, using data from the World Health Survey.

27. Together with the Indigenous Fund, UNFPA and others, ECLAC coordinated the organization of an international seminar on the theme "Indigenous peoples and

Afro-descendents in Latin America and the Caribbean: relevance of sociodemographic information to policies and programmes", with a publication thereon to be issued in March 2006. As a result of the seminar, a working group of experts on the production and analysis of relevant sociodemographic information was created and has already defined its priorities for 2006.

28. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is providing a grant to the Permanent Forum for the development of indigenous-specific indicators on the basis of indigenous peoples' own principles, concepts and practices of development and their perceptions of poverty. The project will convene three regional consultations of indigenous people in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to identify gaps and develop indicators for programming. The indicators will then be presented to the Permanent Forum for review at its fifth session. Following the review, the indicators that can be integrated into the work of the United Nations system — with special emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction strategy papers, common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidelines and sector programme support processes — will be prepared.

29. In addition, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum is organizing a meeting in Ottawa on indigenous peoples and indicators of well-being in high-income countries in March 2006, with a view to informing the upcoming session of the Permanent Forum.

Conclusions

Process: involvement of indigenous peoples

30. Any development of indigenous-specific indicators should be based on consultations with the representatives of the communities and peoples concerned. Experience from other efforts to elaborate indicators could provide useful insight in that regard. Such experience includes the work on indicators for sustainable development led by the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the work on indicators for youth by the youth unit of the Department's Division for Social Policy and Development.

Types of indicators

31. The Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity has identified a number of possible indicators related to traditional knowledge. They include:

- Land-based indicators, such as the change of land-use patterns
- People-based indicators related to demographics and other statistics
- Programme- and policy-based indicators
- Culture-based indicators, such as the existence of cultural institutions

32. When formulating indicators, it is important to bear in mind the feasibility of collecting related data.

Level of disaggregation

33. As noted by the Division for Public Administration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, depending on the level of disaggregation, different types of information can be drawn from the data. For example, disaggregation by geographic region (mountains, coasts, forests, etc.) can be useful to assess the impact of physical space on the social, economic and cultural characteristics of indigenous communities, for example to gauge the effects of resettlement. Disaggregation by province or state can give valuable insight into policy and administration at that level and allow for inter-state comparison. At the municipal level, studies can aid local government administration and planning. At the community level, surveys are useful when conducting individual case studies.

Comparability

34. In defining indigenous-specific indicators, it is important to bear in mind that they should be comparable in time and in space. While the value and interpretation of certain indicators may be different from the point of view of indigenous peoples and alternative indicators may be recommended to assess their situation, it is advisable to maintain existing indicators to be able to compare data. Agencies should, however, be open to the inclusion of additional indicators formulated by indigenous peoples.

Periodicity

35. According to the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, surveys of socio-economic indicators should be conducted annually or, if feasible, semi-annually. It is important that results be published within a six-month time frame upon the completion of the survey. The periodicity of the data collection will, however, also depend on the type of indicators and information sought. For example censuses are usually conducted every five years.

Recommendations

36. **Given the numerous current projects relating to data collection and disaggregation by indigenous origin and indigenous-specific indicators, it is recommended that those efforts be coordinated by a special mechanism in order to avoid inconsistencies and duplication. It is therefore proposed that a working group be created within the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues that would include expert statisticians from member agencies to coordinate the work of the United Nations system in that area. The working group would also involve the participation of members of the Permanent Forum and other indigenous representatives.**

37. **The Permanent Forum could help the United Nations system coordinate work in this area by designating among its members focal points on data and indicators that would advise agencies and remain informed of how projects are progressing.**